

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DROUGHT SYMPOSIUM

BEGIN SUMMARY:

1. DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JUNE THE DROUGHT SYMPOSIUM WAS HELD IN GABORONE UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF AID THROUGH CLARK UNIVERSITY. ADDITIONAL FUNDING WAS PROVIDED BY DE BEERS BOTSWANA MINING COMPANY AND THE BRITISH COUNCIL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SYMPOSIUM PROVIDED A FORUM WHERE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN MULTIFARIOUS ASPECTS OF DROUGHT COULD SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED SCIENTISTS AND UNIVERSITY EXPERTS FROM THE UNITED STATES, AFRICA, EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES FROM DIFFERENT GOB MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS WHO DEAL WITH VARIABLES RELATED TO DROUGHT. THE VICE PRESIDENT (AT THE TIME THE ACTING PRESIDENT) DR. Q.K.J. MASIRE OPENED THE SYMPOSIUM AND ATTENDED SEVERAL SESSIONS. LATER HE COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR NORLAND HOW IMPRESSED HE WAS WITH THE MATERIAL COVERED.

3. THE CONFERENCE HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL OF DROUGHT AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN GENERAL AND HAS PUT THE ISSUE IN THE HANDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA. TOPICS DEALT WITH DURING UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 GABORO 01807 141326Z

THE CONFERENCE INCLUDED: 1) REACHING A DEFINITION OF DROUGHT APPLICABLE TO BOTSWANA, (2) THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF DROUGHT AND (3) METHODS OF AMELIORATING THE IMPACT OF DROUGHT IN THE FUTURE. INSTANCES OF DROUGHT IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD THEIR WAYS OF DROUGHT COMBATTING IT ALSO WERE EXAMINED. SPECIFIC SUBJECTS COVERED WERE LOCAL VARIABILITY OF DROUGHT, CROP PRODUCTION, WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND IRRIGATION, CLIMATIC

CHANGES, DESERTIFICATION, CATTLE PRODUCTION, MARKETING AND BEEF STORAGE, ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE, METHODS OF METEOROLOGICAL MONITORING AND THE TRIBAL GRAZING LANDS POLICY AS RELEVANCE IN A DROUGHT-PRONE ENVIRONMENT. A MAIN CONCEPT WHICH EMERGED FROM THE SYMPOSIUM IS THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND EMPHASIZING INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION.

4. THE ISSUE OF DROUGHT PREDICABILITY WAS ENHANCED THROUGH THE SYMPOSIUM. THROUGH IMPROVED INFORMATION SYSTEMS THE CHANCES ARE BETTER FOR PREDICTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE EASTERN AREA OF BOTSWANA. CYCLES GENERALLY FOLLOW AN EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY YEAR PATTERN. THE BEST ESTIMATE FOR THE 1980S IS THAT THERE

WILL BE TWO TO THREE YEARS OF ABOVE AVERAGE RAINFALL AND THE REMAINDER BELOW AVERAGE. 1982-83 TENTATIVELY HAS BEEN CITED AS A POSSIBLE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT DROUGHT. PREDICTABILITY IS NOT FINELY TUNED BUT A PRACTICAL FOLLOW UP TO THE CONFERENCE WAS THE OFFER OF AN AUSTRALIAN METEOROLOGIST TO TAKE THE YEARLY RECORDS OF RAINFALL IN BOTSWANA AND RUN IT THROUGH A COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM WHICH WILL PINPOINT PERIODS OF RAINFALL DEFICIENCIES. THE SYSTEM HAS PROVED HELPFUL IN PREDICTION FOR AUSTRALIA.

5. CLARK UNIVERSITY WILL PUBLISH 2500 COPIES OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN BOOK FORM WHICH MEANS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WILL HAVE EASY ACCESS TO MUCH OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH MATERIAL ON DROUGHT IN BOTSWANA.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 GABORO 01807 141326Z

6. THE COMPARATIVE UNIQUENESS OF BOTSWANA IS THAT A SENSITIVE QUESTION SUCH AS DROUGHT AND ITS AREAS OF IMPACT CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY AND OPENLY DEALT WITH, AS WAS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE.

7. FOR AID/W STACY: U.S. MISSION GABORONE BELIEVES THE INFORMATION RESULTING FROM THE SYMPOSIUM AND ESPECIALLY THE FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION BETWEEN CLARK UNIVERSITY REP FORD WITH GOB AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES JUNE 9 - 15 WILL BE OF SPECIFIC INTEREST TO SADAP. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT AID/W CONTACT FORD FOR ARRANGING A MEETING.
HOOVER

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